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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 05 MEXICO 000083

SIPDIS
PASS TO DOD/OSD STOCKTON
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TAGS PGOV, PREL, PHUM, SNAR, KCRM, MX
SUBJECT: Scen setter for the Opening of the Defense Bilateral Working
Group, Washington, D.C., February 1
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Classified Secret.

1. (SBU) Summary: The inauguration of the Defense Bilateral Working Group (DBWG) on February 1 comes at a key moment in our efforts to deepen
Summary

2. (SBU) The DBWG is an important component of our overall bilateral Merida strategy for 2010. We ended 2009 with an unprecedented commitment
Political and Economic Context

3. (SBU) It is a challenging moment to address some of the institutional weaknesses that dot the Mexican political landscape and which periodi

4. (SBU) Meanwhile, the opposition Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) is in the ascendancy, cautiously managing its illusory unity in an
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strategy best described as political pragmatism, PRI insiders indicate that the party is unlikely to support any major reform efforts over the
Security Challenges

5. (C) Calderon has aggressively attacked Mexico's drug trafficking organizations but has struggled with an unwieldy and uncoordinated interac

6. (S) The failure to reduce violence has focused attention on the military's perceived failures and led to a major course change in January t

7. (C) Below the surface of military professionalism, there is also considerable tension between SEDENA and SEMAR. SEMAR succeeded in the take
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8. (C) The DBWG is just one mechanism for addressing the challenge of modernization. SEDENA's shortfalls are at times quite noticeable and ser

9. (C) Currently, the military is the lightning rod for criticism of the Calderon Administration's security policies. We are having some succ

10. (C) Military surges that are not coordinated with local city officials and civilian law enforcement, particularly local prosecutors, have

11. (SBU) SEDENA lacks arrest authority and is incapable of processing information and evidence for use in judicial cases. It has taken a seri
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Change on the Horizon

12. (SBU) Calderon has undertaken serious reforms since coming to office, but he also must tread carefully in dealing with the Mexican militar

13. (C) These steps reflect the GOM's willingness to respond to public pressure and to focus on building strong, civilian law enforcement inst

14. (C) USG assistance has been crucial to these efforts, and we are looking ahead to ensure that we help Mexico build its most key institutic
Military Modernization Key

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15. (S) In this context, it is absolutely necessary that we intensify our efforts to encourage modernization of the Mexican military. General

16. (C) Our engagement on human rights in the DBWG must also be carefully structured. Presentations from the U.S. side on how human rights pla

17. (C) SEDENA and SEMAR still have a long way to go toward modernization. The DBWG can go a long way in addressing a number of key points. We